

CHECK-IT: intercultural collaboration between Dutch and Chinese students in ChinaFan Yihong¹, Michiel van Geloven², Zeng Wenhua³, and Zheng Yan⁴**Abstract***(Track: Multicultural Expertise)*

China-Holland Educational Competence and Knowledge Center on Information Technology, or CHECK-IT is a consortium consisting of five Institutes of Higher Education in the Netherlands and the Software School of Xiamen University. Software School of Xiamen University received a special fund from the university to set up a lab for internship purpose of the students, and the consortium of Dutch University of Applied Sciences put in certain percentage of the setting up and running cost, thus resulted in the physical set up of CHECK-IT. In Check-IT, Dutch and Chinese students in IT and Media-Design work together on assignments from companies with interests in the Dutch IT or Chinese IT market. Check-IT is therefore the perfect solution because our students are highly trained in developing for both markets.

The project then received a grant from the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, which enabled the Dutch consortium to make a quick and professional start. The Center is based at Xiamen Software Park, where a dedicated Check-IT office and IT lab has been realized. In these premises, the students and staff are working in a professional environment with professional equipment.

Check-IT was officially in operation in August 2009 after about one year of preparation. The strength of the concept of Check-IT is based on simplicity. Firstly, this is not a single matter of students' exchange: all activities take place in Xiamen, China. Secondly, students work in intercultural teams on projects for China-based or multi-lateral organizations. Thirdly, a Dutch faculty member stays in China to supervise the students together with a Chinese colleague-team, alternating each 3-4 months.

By working in teams, the students will extend their knowledge on IT and develop collaboration between two different cultures. To emphasize this intercultural development, the Institute of Education, Xiamen University organizes cross-cultural and cultural workshops with the students and monitors their development from this perspective. Last month the educational and cross-cultural advisor of CHECK-IT conducted a survey with the CHECK-IT students, both Dutch and Chinese of the current work of CHECK-IT from four aspects:

- ✧ Motivation for participating in CHECK-IT and how the projects are going on;
- ✧ Different learning and working styles and the significance to their competence;
- ✧ Cooperation styles and communication modes and its significance for their future job;
- ✧ Cultural adaptation issues and developing multicultural competences

The survey yielded comprehensive results, which sheds light on the further improvement of CHECK-IT work and the development of learning for both the Chinese and Dutch students. This paper gives the context, development and implement of this new way of learning.

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